supplements the efforts of the States with financial and logistic support. There is ready availability of funds with the States under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to take necessary measures. The Government of India and State Government concerned contribute to CRF in the ratio of 3:1 Additional assistance, over and above CRF, is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), if necessary, for natural calamities of severe nature, in accordance with an established procedure, on submission of Memorandum for assistance from the NCCF by the State Government. No memorandm for Central assistance has been received from any State Government for the current drought.

Irrigation management under Food Security Mission

1966. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed to launch Food Security Mission during the current year;

(b) if so, the financial allocation for this purpose and whether such mission would give prime importance for irrigation management, since lack of irrigation management is the main cause for the decline of food production;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Food Security Mission (NFSM)" has been launched in 305 identified districts of 16 States from Rabi 2007-08 with an aim to increase the additional production of 20 million tonnes of foodgrains, comprising of 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses, by the end of Eleventh Plan (2011-12). The National Food Security Mission (NFSM) has three components *viz.* National Food Security Mission-Rice (NFSM-Rice), National Food Secrurity Mission-wheat (FSM-Wheat) and National Food Security Mission-Pulses (NFSM-Pulses). A Budget allocation of Rs. 402.00 crore has been made during the year 2007-08 for the purpose. Keeping in view the importance of irrigation in accelerating the production of wheat and pulses, provision for pilot project on community generators for irrigation in shallow water table areas, diesel pump sets under NFSM-Wheat and distribution of sprinkler sets under NFSM-Pulses has been made.

Floriculture Board

1967. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up a Floriculture Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) There is no such proposal under consideration;

(c) The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely

Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern and Himalayan States (TMNE) and National Horticulture Mission (NHM), aim to increasing the production and productivity of horticltural crops including Floriculture. Under these schemes, assistance is provided to the farmers for area expansion, production of quality planting material of elite cultivars, adoption of new technologies, integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management, etc. Besides, National Horticulture Board is also implementing schemes which provide assistance for production of horticulture crops including floriculture. These measures are expected to enhance the production of floriculture crops in the country. In addition to these, the Government has taken the following steps for promotion of floriculture in the country:—

(i) Agri-Export Zones: To promote the floriculture industry in key producing region, six agri-export zones (AEZs) have been set up, namely, Tamil Nadu (two floriculture AEZs) and one each in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Sikkim and Uttaranchal.

(ii) Post Harvest Infrastructure: APEDA sponsored cold storages have been set-up at various airports like Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore and Trivandrum, to help exporters store their produce since there usually is a time lag between the time the flowers arrive at the airport and are loaded onto the aircrafts.

(iii) Expansion of Product Basket: Initiatives are being taken to diversify the product range from purely roses exports to gerberas from Uttaranchal, Carnations from Himachal Pradesh, Heieconias from Kerela, Tuberose and Marigold from West Bengal, etc. In addition, the export of exotic flowers like anthuriums from the North-East (Mizoram, Meghalaya) have already commenced. Also, a bulb multiplication project is underway in Uttaranchal funded by the Government's ASIDE Scheme.

(iv) Freight Subsidy: Since the high freight costs make the Indian floriculture exports uncompetitive, APEDA provides a Transport Assistance Subsidy to the exporters to offset the freight costs. This has proved to help the exporters in a big way and has substantially reduced their transaction costs and the airfreight cost disadvantage that they face *vis-a-vis* international competitors. A proposal has been submitted to continue this scheme during the Eleventh Plan Period.

(v) Market Facilitation Centre: APEDA had setup its first MFC in the Netherlands in 2001. This has been a key initiative to increase Indian fresh-cut flower exports. Due to the MFC's presence at the location where the maximum international trade takes place has provided Indian growers with a perspective of changing trends, requirements of the market, etc. Further, the establishment of this Center has resulted in reduced rejection, improved quality and presentation of our exports. In view of its success and experience gained, Government now plans to setup such centers at Tokyo and Dubai to capitalize on the huge market opportunity.

(vi) Modern Flower Auction Centre: To develop a market locally (and a supply base for exports), APEDA has taken an initiative of setting up auction centers in Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata and Noida. The consolidation of supplies would enable the importers in the international markets to source their supplies from these auction centers. The price transparency and prompt payments would enable faster growth of the industry that would help build up the volume necessary for competitive supplies to the international market.